

THE STUDY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 11-12 YEAR-OLD SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' EMPATHY SKILLS AND SELF-ESTEEM LEVELS

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ABSTRACT

The present study is conducted to determine the relationship between 11-12 year-old Turkish secondary school students' empathy skills and self-esteem levels. General screening model is used within the study. The study is conducted with 478 11-12 year-old students who were attending 5th and 6th grades in Ankara, Turkey. In order to collect data the following tools are applied to students; Personal Information Form, CooperSmith Self-Esteem Inventory- SEI and Index of Empathy for Children. According to the findings of the study, the differences regarding gender were statistically meaningful in favor of 11-12 year-old girls. Their empathy skills and social self-esteem levels are found higher than those of 11-12 year-old boys. Moreover, a positive relation is observed between students' empathy and self-esteem scores. Accordingly, students with high empathy skills are also found to have high self-esteem levels.

Keywords: Empathy, self-esteem, empathy and self-esteem in secondary school education, 11-12 year-old students

INTRODUCTION

People's healthy, happy and peaceful lives depend on their development of communicative skills and its effective use (Dere Çiftçi, 2014). Effective communication provides people information exchange, helping them understand each other in a better way, use their communicative strategies more effectively and take an active role in group activities (Shahzad et al., 2011). While communicating effectively people find an opportunity to explain, share and evaluate their feelings and thoughts, affect others with their ideas and vice versa, benefit from people's ideas and experiences and help them with their own (Kılıcıgil et al., 2009). Effective communication depends on respect, transparency and empathy. Respect means that the individual accepts the existence of the other, makes him/her feel special and precious and embrace him/her as the ways s/he is. Transparency is being as you are and not trying to hide your feelings or thoughts but instead showing them and explaining them honestly (Eroğlu, 2012). The most important factor for an effective communication is empathy.

Empathy

There are a lot of definitions made for empathy. Carl Rogers (1983) described empathy as a process of "the individual putting himself in the other person's shoes, understanding and perceiving his feelings and thoughts correctly and then forwarding this to him" (Certel et al., 2013; Dere Çiftçi, 2013).

Empathy is also defined in many other ways such as; seeing through somebody else's eyes or being in another's reference frame (Wiseman, 1996), the two people experiencing and expressing similar feelings without having conflict (Decety and Meyer, 2008), the individual

putting himself in another one's shoes, respecting that other one and his ability of acting together (Tarhan, 2010) and the capacity of understanding or imagining the way that other one feels (Gilet et al., 2013).

Empathy is a multidimensional structure that includes sensory and cognitive components. The first component is related to understanding and experiencing others' feelings and the second one is related with understanding the point of view of others in emotional conditions (Belacchi and Farina, 2012).

Empathy can also be examined as a process; listening to another, interpreting what you have been listening to and giving feedback afterwards, exchanging information or sharing experiences. As empathy involves understanding, reflecting, imagination and compassion it is a feeling but it can turn into a behavior when you respond to what is being told (Broomhead, 2013).

Empathy is important to the individual in order to lead a more qualified and happier life and make effective contacts in the environment. For an effective communication the individual should be able to see and foresee the other person's point of view while looking at the events (Metin, 2011).

Empathy plays a great role in social interactions such as understanding the purposes of others, guessing the way they are going to behave and feel the way they feel (Dewaele and Wei, 2012).

Empathy is one of the most important features of the social life that helps individuals understand and listen to each other and accept each other as the way they are (Dereli and Aypar, 2006). Empathy is the skill of understanding others' feelings, thoughts and concrete experiences that enables the person to be willing to agree, discuss and accept the differences and keep himself away from aggression (Hollingsworth et al., 2007). This skill helps the individual to evaluate others' emotional reactions correctly and choose the right social behaviors (Fitness and Curtis, 2005). Showing empathy towards someone helps the person develop, get mature, be more helpful and contributes close relationships and sharing (Çolakoğlu and Solak, 2014). These individuals are better in building good relationships and carrying them on and as individuals having more developed ethical judgements (Van der Mark et al., 2002; Del Barrio et al., 2004), they can put themselves in the other person's shoes and can look from his point of view. Besides, having high or low empathic skills affects person's skills of gathering information, observing, generating choices, choosing, and evaluating the results and problem-solving (Certel et. al. 2013).

Empathic skills help the individual foresee the other's behavior, act accordingly, and make appropriate decisions and changes when necessary (King, 2011). Empathy helps the individual notice the effects of his behaviors on others and what emotional results can emerge so it prevents misunderstanding and getting hurt (Singer and Lamm, 2009).

Self-esteem

Self-esteem level also substantially affects individual's communication skills and behaviors as much as empathic skills. Self-esteem is an alliance of emotions and thoughts that one feels towards himself in various aspects of life (Scheier et al., 2000). Self-esteem is also described as a measurable evaluation process of one's success rate regarding his own wishes (Elfhag et al., 2010) or as the value that one gives to his own characteristics, qualifications, skills and behaviors (Griffin-Shirley and Nes, 2005).

Rosenberg (1965) defined self-esteem as one's positive or negative attitudes towards himself (Farris et al., 2013). Self-esteem affects people's perceptions, motivation, emotions and behaviors. Self-esteem is important for one's life satisfaction (Chen et al., 2006) mental and physical health protection and for fulfillment of financial expectations (Lesar and Vitulić, 2014).

The individual having high or low self-esteem affects his life positively or negatively. High self-esteem is related to being healthy and productive, academic and professional success, having positive relations with others, coping with difficulties and sense of welfare (Kutob et al., 2010). Individuals with high self-esteem levels are good at making positive self-assessment and improvement, they are also more successful in self-presentation and repairing their mistakes in their social lives (Buckingham et al., 2012).

Individuals who have high self-esteem levels trust their skills of making decisions, having expectations of success, trying new things, being sensitive to others' needs, respecting others' thoughts and feelings and showing dignity (Griffin-Shirley and Nes, 2005). Self-esteem during childhood and puberty helps children overcome difficulties and persevere in dangerous (Farris et al., 2013). The development of strong self-esteem perception in childhood is important for the child in terms of coping with the family stress and social pressure he experiences (Dalgas-Pelish, 2006).

It is also possible to see unstable self-esteem levels in some individuals. These individuals tend to defend themselves and deal with self-improvement strategies a lot more especially when they are under threat. Besides, individuals with unstable high self-esteem levels have difficulty in forgiving those who violate their rights (Cheng et al., 2012).

On the other hand, individuals with low self-esteem feel incompetent and worthless, easily influenced by others, can easily change their ideas and attitudes, have difficulty in coping with difficulties of daily life and controlling their feelings. These children are shy, are extremely quite or they show aggressive behaviors in their social settings don't want to participate in new activities offered, are very afraid of making mistakes, worried in the exams or have behaviors of perfectionism (Çetinkaya et al., 2006) and are insensitive to others' feelings (Canevello and Crocker, 2011). Moreover, children and teenagers with low self-esteem have compliance problems and showing poor academic success (Aunola et al., 2000; Farris et al., 2013; Lipschitz-Elhawi and Itzhaky, 2005).

Children with low self-esteem show more aggressive behaviors towards their peers (e.t. Dere Çiftçi, 2015). They blame others for their own problems in order to protect their self-esteem from possible negative effects and they express it by showing aggression towards them (Ostrowsky, 2010). Individuals with low self-esteem also stay away from hard tasks or just leave these tasks unfinished as they tend to protect themselves and don't ask for anybody else's support in situations that is threatening to them (Weber and Sypher, 2012). Besides all these, having low self-esteem is related to some psychological and behavioral problems such as eating and attitude disorders, smoking, substance abuse, anxiety, depression, suicide, obesity and poor academic success and also some twisted social behaviors such as being aggressive, depressive and anxious (Dalgas-Pelish, 2006).

Self-esteem is a complicated concept related to children's overall developmental stages and the basis of personality development. Main personal features form during early ages but during puberty these features change or get better with the effort spent to affect self-esteem concept or change it. Ages 12-13 are the ages that self-esteem and self-respect are at the lowest level and by time this level starts to increase again. It is seen that during this period

which is between early puberty and adulthood girls' self-esteem levels are decreasing while boys' were increasing (Cantin and Boivin, 2004; Dalgas-Pelish, 2006).

Empathy and self-esteem have an important place in each child's life to communicate. As children develop the sense of self-concept, interact with the whole world and get experienced their self-esteem is influenced by all (Griffin-Shirley and Nes, 2005).

Self-esteem plays a great role in building relationships among people and have secure attachment. Especially during these ages known as early puberty period it is thought that children's self-esteem and empathy states can be determined and this determination can be directive in educational applications and personality development studies. The present study also examines the relationship between 11-12 year-old Turkish children's empathy skills and self-esteem levels.

METHODOLOGY

In the present study general screening model is used. General screening model is applied to make a judgement about population on the whole population or on a group chosen from the population (Karasar, 1994).

Ethics

The study was approved by the Ethics Council of Scientific Research Projects with Academic Purposes at the University of Turgut Özal, and the research was started after the approval of the committee.

Participants

The present study is conducted to determine the relationship between 11-12 year-old students' empathy skills and self-esteem levels living in Ankara, Turkey. The participants were 600 voluntary secondary school students who were selected with random sampling method from Yenimahalle and Altındağ central districts. However, 122 students were not included in the study since 66 students didn't answer some of the items within the test and 56 students got 5 points or above from lie sub-scale of self-esteem scale. 478 students completing the test fully were considered as the data resource of the study. Personal Information Form, Index of Empathy for Children and Cooper smith Self-Esteem Inventory-SEI were applied to the participants. 47,9 % (229) of the participants were 11 year-olds, 52,1% (249) 12 year-olds, 49 % (234) them were girls and 51% (244) of them were boys. 47,5% (227) were studying in the 5th grade, 52,5% (251) were studying in the 6th grade. Demographic features of the students' parents educational status are as follows;

Table 1 (Part-I). Demographic information of children's parents in study

		<i>Mother</i>		<i>Father</i>	
		<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Parent's Educational Status</i>	<i>Elementary</i>	106	22,2	82	17,2
	<i>Secondary</i>	89	18,6	68	14,2
	<i>High School</i>	131	27,4	119	24,9
	<i>University</i>	152	31,8	209	43,7
	<i>Total</i>	478	100	478	100

Table 1 (Part-II). Demographic information of children’s parents in study

		<i>Mother</i>		<i>Father</i>	
		<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Parent’s Age</i>	<i>20-30</i>	44	9,2	15	3,1
	<i>31-40</i>	347	72,6	258	54
	<i>41-50</i>	85	17,8	182	38,1
	<i>51 and over</i>	2	0,4	23	4,8
	<i>Total</i>	478	100	478	100
<i>Parent’s Occupation</i>	<i>White-collar worker</i>	84	17,6	116	24,3
	<i>Blue-collar worker</i>	39	8,2	192	40,2
	<i>Healthcare Worker</i>	29	6,1	22	4,6
	<i>Housewife</i>	302	63,2	---	---
	<i>Engineer</i>	5	1	33	6,9
	<i>Self-employed</i>	6	1,3	86	18
	<i>Accountant</i>	6	1,3	7	1,5
	<i>Law</i>	5	1	6	1,3
	<i>Retired</i>	2	0,4	16	3,3
	<i>Total</i>	478	100	478	100

Instrument and Data Collection

In order to collect the data of the present study the Personal Information Form, Cooper Smith Self-Esteem Inventory- SEL and Index of Empathy for Children were used.

Personal Information Form

Personal Information Form is prepared by the researcher to gather information about the children’s age, gender, grade and parents’ age, educational level and occupation.

Index of Empathy for Children

The scale was developed by Bryant (1982), and Turkish adaptation of the scale is conducted by Yüksel (2003). The scale formed with 20 items and applied to students ranging in age from 7 to 13. The way items are expressed requires "Yes" or "No" answers and the top score that one can get from it is between 0-20. The reliability studies of the ‘Index of Empathy for Children’ is carried out via calculating coefficients of internal consistency and using test-retest technique; for internal consistency level Cronbach Alpha coefficient is found as .70, and for stability level it is found as $r=.694$ ($p<.001$). For construct validity of the scale Principal Component Analysis is carried out and found that most of the factor loads were on the first factor. Depending on the results two items were removed so the scale composed of 20 items (Yüksel, 2003). Cronbach Alpha value was found as .69. Statistical analysis applied has shown that the scale is also valid and reliable for the present study.

Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory- SEI

Cooper Smith Self-Esteem Inventory is a “self-evaluation scale” developed by Cooper Smith in 1967 to determine individual’s self-esteem level. The first adaptation of Cooper Smith Self-Esteem Inventory- SEI into Turkish is conducted by Onur (1981) on 127 primary school

students. In Güçray's (1993) validity and reliability study of the scale on primary school children between 9-11 years old, the internal consistency, score-invariant and validity of similar scales are examined. These statistical analysis are applied considering total scores. KR-21 values in different groups are found as .83 and .75. For test re-test reliability the scale applied with a two-week break on 51 students and the correlation coefficient is found as .70. The inventory includes items that emphasize children's or young ones' personal beliefs about themselves in terms of feeling skillful, competent, important and worthy and behaviors that are habits and attitudes that he approves or disapproves. Self-Esteem Inventory consists of five sub-scales that are related with different aspects of self-esteem. These are; General Self-Esteem (26 Items), Social (8 Items), Academic (8 Items), Home and Family-oriented Self-Esteem (8 Items), Lie (8 Items) sub-scales. Items related to lie sub-scale are not included in scoring so 50 items are taken into consideration while scoring. Along with sub-scale scores, total scores are also calculated. High score means high self-esteem. The Cronbach Alpha value of the scale is found as .60 and depending on the results of the analysis the scale is found reliable also for the present study.

Data Analyses

SPSS 20 packaged program is used to analyze the data of the present study. Because of the number of units Shapiro Wilk's is used while examining the normal range of the variables. While interpreting the results the significance level was 0,05; $p < 0,05$ showed that distribution of the variables were not normal and $p > 0,05$ showed that the distribution of the variables were normal. When the distribution of the variables were not normal Mann Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis-H Tests are used in order to examine the differences between the groups. When the differences found with Kruskal Wallis-H Test were meaningful, Post-Hoc Multiple Comparison Analysis is used to determine these differing groups. While examining the relations between the groups Spearman's Correlation Coefficient is used for the variables that are not distributed normally and Pearson Correlation Coefficient is used for the variables that are distributed normally. Crombah's Alpha and KR-20 are used while conducting reliability studies of the scales. When the distribution of the variables were not normal Mann Whitney U is used and while examining the relations between the groups Spearman's Correlation Coefficient is used. While interpreting the results the significance level was 0,05. $p < 0,05$ indicated that there was a meaningful difference/relation and $p > 0,05$ indicated that there was no meaningful difference/relation.

FINDINGS

Findings of the present study are presented as follows:

Table 2. Mann Whitney U Test Results of the Scale and Sub-dimension Scores of 11 and 12 Year-old Students in terms of Gender Differences

			Gender			Mann Whitney U Test			
			n	Mean	ss	Mean Rank	U	p	
Empathy for Children	Empathy	11 year-old	Girl	106	14,62	3,23	133,53	4,208	0,001
			Boy	121	12,58	3,64	96,89		
		Total	227	13,53	3,6				
	12 year-old	Girl	128	14,61	3,16	138,64			

Cooper Smith Self-Esteem Inventory- SEI	<i>old</i>	<i>Boy</i>	123	13,41	3,35	112,84	- 2,827	0,005 *	
		<i>Total</i>	251	14,02	3,3				
		<i>Girl</i>	106	18,89	4,54	116,8			
	<i>General Self-esteem</i>	<i>11 year-old</i>	<i>Boy</i>	121	18,49	4,68	111,55	- 0,602	0,547
			<i>Total</i>	227	18,67	4,61			
			<i>Girl</i>	128	18,9	4,11	122,91		
	<i>12 year-old</i>	<i>Boy</i>	123	19,06	4,54	129,22	- 0,690	0,490	
		<i>Total</i>	251	18,98	4,32				
		<i>Girl</i>	106	6	1,66	125,49			
	<i>Social Self-esteem</i>	<i>11 year-old</i>	<i>Boy</i>	121	5,39	1,85	103,93	- 2,507	0,012
			<i>Total</i>	227	5,67	1,79			
			<i>Girl</i>	128	6,33	1,35	143,4		
	<i>12 year-old</i>	<i>Boy</i>	123	5,45	1,78	107,89	- 3,966	0,001 *	
		<i>Total</i>	251	5,9	1,64				
		<i>Girl</i>	106	5,89	2,13	120,8			
	<i>Home-Family Self-esteem</i>	<i>11 year-old</i>	<i>Boy</i>	121	5,7	1,78	108,05	- 1,486	0,137
			<i>Total</i>	227	5,79	1,95			
			<i>Girl</i>	128	5,57	1,97	122,18		
	<i>12 year-old</i>	<i>Boy</i>	123	5,78	1,91	129,98	- 0,866	0,387	
		<i>Total</i>	251	5,67	1,94				
		<i>Girl</i>	106	5,62	1,85	119,74			
	<i>Academic Self-esteem</i>	<i>11 year-old</i>	<i>Boy</i>	121	5,26	1,99	108,97	- 1,248	0,212
			<i>Total</i>	227	5,43	1,93			
			<i>Girl</i>	128	5,52	1,85	132,27		
<i>12 year-old</i>	<i>Boy</i>	123	5,24	1,75	119,47	- 1,417	0,157		
	<i>Total</i>	251	5,38	1,8					
	<i>Girl</i>	106	17,19	5	119,96				
<i>Short Form</i>	<i>11 year-old</i>	<i>Boy</i>	121	16,44	4,89	108,78	- 1,282	0,200	
		<i>Total</i>	227	16,79	4,94				
		<i>Girl</i>	128	16,8	4,44	126,08			
<i>12 year-old</i>	<i>Boy</i>	123	16,64	4,87	125,92	- 0,017	0,986		
	<i>Total</i>	251	16,73	4,65					

***p < 0.05**

There were statistically meaningful differences in terms of 11 and 12 year-old students' genders regarding their scores from empathy scale and social self-esteem sub-scale ($p < 0,05$). In both scales, girls' empathy scores and social self-esteem sub-scale scores were higher than those of boys. There were no statistically meaningful gender differences regarding general self-esteem, home-family self-esteem, academic self-esteem and short form sub-tests ($p > 0,05$). However, when it is examined in terms of arithmetic means 12 year-old boys' scores were higher in general self-esteem, home-family self-esteem and short form sub-dimensions and for all other sub-dimensions girls had higher scores.

Table 3. 11 Year-old Students' Correlation Test Results in terms of the Relationship between their Empathy Scale Scores and Self-esteem Sub-dimension Scores

		Correlation Test						
		Empathy	General Self-esteem	Social Self-esteem	Home-Family Self-esteem	Academic Self-esteem	Short Form	
Index of Empathy for Children	<i>r</i>	1						
	<i>p</i>	.						
	<i>N</i>	227						
Cooper Smith Self-Esteem Inventory- SEI	<i>General Self-esteem</i>	<i>r</i>	0,109	1				
		<i>p</i>	0,101	.				
		<i>N</i>	227	227				
	<i>Social Self-esteem</i>	<i>r</i>	0,147	0,521	1			
		<i>p</i>	0,027*	0,001*	.			
		<i>N</i>	227	227	227			
	<i>Home-Family Self-esteem</i>	<i>r</i>	0,148	0,62	0,41	1		
		<i>p</i>	0,025*	0,001*	0,001*	.		
		<i>N</i>	227	227	227	227		
	<i>Academic Self-esteem</i>	<i>r</i>	0,183	0,662	0,454	0,474	1	
		<i>p</i>	0,006*	0,001*	0,001*	0,001*	.	
		<i>N</i>	227	227	227	227	227	
	<i>Short Form</i>	<i>r</i>	0,126	0,867	0,648	0,765	0,698	1
		<i>p</i>	0,058	0,001*	0,001*	0,001*	0,001*	.
		<i>N</i>	227	227	227	227	227	227

When the relation between 11 year-old students' empathy scale scores and self-esteem sub-dimension scores were examined; a statistically meaningful difference is found between 11 year-old students' empathy scale scores and social self-esteem, home and family self-esteem and academic self-esteem scores ($p < 0,05$). As students' empathy scores increased their social self-esteem scores ($r=0,147$), home and family self-esteem scores ($r=0,148$) and academic self-esteem scores ($r=0,183$) increased too. A statistically meaningful difference is found

between students' general self-esteem scores and scores of social self-esteem, home and family self-esteem, academic self-esteem and short form self-esteem ($p < 0,05$). As students' general self-esteem scores increased their scores of social self-esteem ($r = 0,521$), home and family self-esteem ($r = 0,620$), academic self-esteem ($r = 0,662$) and short form self-esteem ($r = 0,867$) increased too. A statistically meaningful difference is found between students' social self-esteem scores and scores of home and family self-esteem, academic self-esteem and short form self-esteem ($p < 0,05$). As students' social self-esteem scores increased their scores of home and family self-esteem ($r = 0,410$), academic self-esteem ($r = 0,454$) and short form self-esteem ($r = 0,648$) increased too. A statistically meaningful difference is found between students' home and family self-esteem scores and scores of academic and short form self-esteem ($p < 0,05$). As students' home and family self-esteem scores increased, scores of academic self-esteem ($r = 0,474$) and short form self-esteem ($r = 0,765$) also increased. Besides, it is seen that as students' academic self-esteem scores, scores of short form self-esteem ($r = 0,698$) increased too. The relations were all found positive.

Table 4. 12 Year-old Students' Correlation Test Results in terms of the Relationship between their Empathy Scale Scores and Self-esteem Sub-dimension Scores

		Correlation Test					
		Empathy	General Self-esteem	Social Self-esteem	Home-Family Self-esteem	Academic Self-esteem	Short Form
Empathy for Children	<i>r</i>		1				
	<i>p</i>		.				
	<i>N</i>		251				
Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory- SEI	<i>General Self-esteem</i>	<i>r</i>	0,203	1			
		<i>p</i>	0,001*	.			
		<i>N</i>	251	251			
	<i>Social Self-esteem</i>	<i>r</i>	0,18	0,497	1		
		<i>p</i>	0,004*	0,001*	.		
		<i>N</i>	251	251	251		
	<i>Home-Family Self-esteem</i>	<i>r</i>	0,231	0,603	0,284	1	
		<i>p</i>	0,001*	0,001*	0,001*	.	
		<i>N</i>	251	251	251	251	
	<i>Academic Self-esteem</i>	<i>r</i>	0,188	0,641	0,375	0,44	1
		<i>p</i>	0,003*	0,001*	0,001*	0,001*	.
		<i>N</i>	251	251	251	251	251
<i>Short Form</i>	<i>r</i>	0,233	0,874	0,549	0,768	0,678	
	<i>p</i>	0,001*	0,001*	0,001*	0,001*	0,001*	
	<i>N</i>	251	251	251	251	251	

* $p < 0.05$

When the relation between 12 year-old students' empathy scale scores and self-esteem sub-dimension scores were examined; a statistically meaningful difference is found between 12 year-old students' empathy scale scores and scores of general self-esteem, social self-esteem, home and family self-esteem, academic self-esteem and short form self-esteem ($p < 0,05$). As students' empathy scores increased, their scores of general self-esteem ($r = 0,203$), social self-esteem ($r = 0,180$), home and family self-esteem ($r = 0,231$) and academic self-esteem ($r = 0,188$) also increased. A statistically meaningful difference is found between students' general self-esteem scores and scores of social self-esteem, home and family self-esteem, academic self-esteem and short form self-esteem ($p < 0,05$). As students' general self-esteem scores increased, scores of social self-esteem ($r = 0,497$), home and family self-esteem ($r = 0,603$), academic self-esteem ($r = 0,641$) and short form self-esteem ($r = 0,874$) increased too. A statistically meaningful difference is found between students' social self-esteem scores and scores of home and family self-esteem, academic self-esteem and short form self-esteem ($p < 0,05$). As students' social self-esteem scores increased, scores of home and family self-esteem ($r = 0,284$), academic self-esteem ($r = 0,375$) and short form self-esteem ($r = 0,549$) also increased. There is a statistically meaningful difference between students' home and family self-esteem scores and scores of academic self-esteem and short form self-esteem ($p < 0,05$). As students' home and family self-esteem scores increased, scores of academic self-esteem ($r = 0,440$) and short form self-esteem ($r = 0,768$) also increased. There is also a statistically meaningful difference between students' academic self-esteem scores and short form self-esteem scores ($p < 0,05$). As students' academic self-esteem scores increased, scores of short form self-esteem ($r = 0,678$) increased too. The relations were all found positive.

DISCUSSION

The present study is conducted to determine the relationship between 11-12 year-old secondary school students' empathy skills and self-esteem levels.

When empathy skills and self-esteem levels of students are examined in terms of gender, statistically meaningful difference is found in social self-esteem sub-scale of students' empathy skills and self-esteem levels. Girls' empathy scores and social self-esteem sub-scale scores were meaningfully higher than those of boys. In other words, girls show more empathy than boys and also their social self-esteem levels are higher than those of boys. Within their studies Çoklakoğlu and Solak (2014) and Taner Derman (2013) also determined that girls' empathy skills are meaningfully higher than boys'. Dalgas-Pelish (2006) found that 5th and 6th grade female students had meaningfully higher self-esteem levels than boys had. Minzi (2013), Yüksel (2009), Zajdel, Bloom, Fireman and Larsen (2013) also found that girls' empathy levels were higher.

When the relation between 11 year-old students' empathy skills and self-esteem levels are examined; a statistically meaningful difference is found between empathy scale scores and self-esteem scores of social self-esteem, home and family self-esteem and academic self-esteem scores. Students with high empathy skills found as having high self-esteem levels. There was a relation between students' general self-esteem scores and self-esteem sub-tests scores of social self-esteem, home and family self-esteem, academic and short form self-esteem. As for the relation between 12 year-old students' empathy skills and self-esteem levels; a positive relation is found between students' empathy skills and self-esteem levels. That is, when students' scores of empathy skills were high, their scores of self-esteem sub-tests regarding general self-esteem, social self-esteem, home and family self-esteem, academic self-esteem and short form self-esteem were high too. Besides, a positive relation is

also found between students' scores of general self-esteem, social self-esteem, home and family self-esteem, academic self-esteem and short form self-esteem. As students' general self-esteem scores increased their social self-esteem scores, home and family self-esteem scores, academic self-esteem scores and short form self-esteem scores also increased. Yüksel (2009) found positive relation among 5th grade students' empathy, family functions and self-concepts. The findings of Kalliopuska (1987), Kalliopuska (1992) revealed that there was a relation between elementary and secondary school students' empathy skills and self-esteem levels. Yılmaz, Yiğit and Yurt (2012) determined with their study that girls' general self-esteem were meaningfully higher than those of boys. Alkhateeb and Abushihab (2014) examined the relation between 6-12 year-old children's self-esteem and academic competence and found that students with high self-esteem were more successful.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the present study conducted to determine the relationship between 11-12 year-old secondary school students' empathy skills and self-esteem levels the findings are as follows; a) in terms of gender, girls' empathy scores and scores of social self-esteem sub-dimension of self-esteem scale were higher than those of boys b) there was a meaningful relation between 11 year-old students' empathy skills and self-esteem scale scores of social self-esteem, home and family self-esteem and academic self-esteem scores c) 12 year-old students who had high scores from empathy skills, got also high scores from self-esteem sub-tests of general self-esteem, social self-esteem, home and family self-esteem, academic self-esteem and short form self-esteem.

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